

44-27

VESUVIUS ERUPTION.

In sound and picture we bring you the awe-inspiring scenes of Mount Vesuvius in eruption. New-rol and R.A.F. film unit cameras record the volcanic outburst. Flying round the crater, our cameraman sees the deadly stream of molten lava starting on its downward path, thick with enormous columns clouds of hydrangea-coloured smoke billowing upwards.

Villages in the path of the avalanche of hungry lava are consumed and buried. A catastrophe which has struck at Italian civilians already hard hit by war. Evacuation starts again. The enemy this time is burning lava approaching like a slow tidal wave and engulfing everything before it. The main square in Carcola fills with refugees. This town itself is threatened. There are orders to save what you can and get out - yes, get out.

With deadly insistence the molten flow burns its way overland. The same volcano which played on the ruins of ancient POMPEII sends its insidious matter flowing again. Not since 1872 has Vesuvius erupted with such violence. The scorching mass burns and buries as it creeps along its many gruesome paths.

By night the incandescent wall glows angrily. Piled up, in places to heights of a hundred feet, fiery boulders are detached and pitch forward. All the time there is that awful rumble and roar from this flow which nothing can halt.

The towns of NOCERA and PAGANI have gone. And now, standing in a street in SAN SEBASTIANO, the cameraman faces the lava wall at close range taking big risks as it crushes its way down the road. It heaps itself against houses until the pressure crumples the buildings and they fall in ruins.

Of all the sights witnessed the next is perhaps the most frightful. A gigantic tumbling wave of molten fire tolling its red-hot way into SAN SEBASTIANO.

A heat haze hangs over the scorched earth. The all-engulfing mass burns its way forward. Its initial speed was said to be 300 yards an hour.

The last minutes of SAN SEBASTIANO; Swallowed up and cremated.

From this town R.A.F. men and lorries evacuated the people.

From paving stones and gardens there burst clouds of steam from an engulfed wall. Vesuvius had out-watched the efforts of man at total destruction... Nature was at war.